



Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center Room 40
15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Agenda

Christopher B. Coleman,
Mayor

September 2, 2011
8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Saint Paul
Planning Commission

Chair
Jon Commers
First Vice Chair
Barbara A. Wencil
Second Vice Chair
Paula Merrigan
Secretary
Anthony Fernandez

Pat Connolly
Gene Gelgelu
Bree Halverson
Richard Kramer
Gaius Nelson
Christopher Ochs
Trevor Oliver
Julie Perrus
Marilyn Porter
Elizabeth Reveal
Anthony Schertler
Robert Spaulding
Terri Thao
Jun-Li Wang
Daniel Ward II
David Wickiser
Roxanne Young

Planning Director
Donna Drummond

I. Approval of minutes of August 19, 2011

II. Chair's Announcements

III. Planning Director's Announcements

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Red Rock Station Area Plan – Item from the Transportation Committee. (*Christina Morrison, 651/266-6546*)

V. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (*Tom Beach, 651/266-9086*)

NEW BUSINESS

#11-255-877 Rolando Aguilar et al – Rezoning from RT1 Two-Family Residential to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. 833 York Avenue NE corner of Arcade at York.
(*Luis Pereira, 651/266-6591*)

#11-260-156 Meridian Industrial Appeal – Appeal to Planning Commission by Union Park District Council of staff decision made on July 20, 2011 to approve the site plan. 650 Pelham Blvd. (*Tom Beach, 651/266-9086*)

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

VIII. Transportation Committee

IX. Communications Committee

X. Task Force Reports

XI. Old Business

XII. New Business

XIII. Adjournment

Information on agenda items being considered by the Planning Commission and its committees can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ped, click on Planning.

Planning Commission Members: PLEASE call Sonja Butler, 651/266-6573, if unable to attend.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission &
Heritage Preservation Commission
MASTER MEETING CALENDAR**

WEEK OF AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 2- 2011

Mon (29) _____

Tues (30) _____

4:00- Comprehensive Planning Committee
5:30 p.m. (Penelope Simison, 651/266-6554)

HAS BEEN CANCELLED

Weds (31) _____

Thurs (1) _____

Fri (2) _____

8:30- Planning Commission Meeting
11:00 a.m. (Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 40 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

PUBLIC HEARING: - Red Rock Station Area Plan– Item from the Transportation Committee. *(Christina Morrison, 651/266-6546)*

Zoning..... SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

NEW BUSINESS

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#11-260-156 Meridian Industrial Appeal – Appeal to Planning Commission by Union Park District Council of staff decision made on July 20, 2011 to approve the site plan. 650 Pelham Blvd. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes August 19, 2011

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, August 19, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Perrus, Reveal, Thao, Wang, Wencil; and Messrs. Connolly, Fernandez, Gelgelu, Kramer, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, Schertler, and Spaulding.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Halverson, *Merrigan, *Porter, *Young, and Messrs. *Commers, *Ward, and *Wickiser.

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Tom Beach, Department of Safety and Inspections; Christine Boulware, Patricia James, Sarah Zorn, Jessica Rosenfeld, Anton Jerve, Ryan Kelley, Matt Wolff, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes August 5, 2011.

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of August 5, 2011. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Commissioner Wencil, who is the Commission's first vice chair, chaired the meeting. She had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond reported that last Wednesday the City Council held a public hearing on the proposed student housing zoning moratorium and the people who testified against were people who wanted to potentially sell their properties for rental housing in the future or had student rental housing and felt this moratorium was an infringement on their rights. Several people also testified that it's been a real problem around the University of St. Thomas. The moratorium will be up for final adoption next week.

The Mayor announced his proposed budget for 2012 earlier this week and he is proposing a combination of \$6 million in budget cuts and an increase of about \$6 million in the levy. That will result in the elimination of 50 FTE's and the most of those will be accomplished through vacancies and none are currently proposed for the planning staff.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

Two items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, August 16, 2011. West Side Flats located at 84 Wabasha Street South, 168 unit apartments with retail and covered parking; and the Schmidt Brewery Redevelopment located at 882 West 7th Street, 250 artist loft apartments and 13 new townhome units.

Three items will come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, August 23, 2011. Crosby-Elway parking lot located at 2412 Shepard Road West, 12 car parking lot using pavers, removal of Crosby Lake Road, install trail and area for kiosk; Como Park Japanese Garden Experience located at 1225 Estabrook Drive, a new building entrance to Japanese Garden; and the Penfield – mixed use development located at 100 – 11th Street East, 29,697 sq. ft. Grocery and 253 apartments.

OLD BUSINESS

#11-250-250 Dram Investment LLP – Re-establishment of nonconforming use as a car wash. 1340 7th Street West between Mercer and Victoria. *(Ryan Kelley, 651/266-6562)*

Commissioner Kramer stated that this case had been laid over to get additional information on some of the issues regarding the previous operation and the impact on the neighborhood and how these might be addressed if the operation were to resume.

Commissioner Perrus asked about a prior approval that included six gas pumps and a used car lot.

Commissioner Kramer said this permit pertains only to the nonconforming use as the car wash and does not apply to previous auto sales and gas pumps. There are no gas pumps currently onsite; he did not know the status of the underground tanks.

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the re-establishment of legal nonconforming use subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#11-250-154 HRA (765 Edgerton) – Re-establishment of nonconforming use as a triplex. 765 Edgerton Street between Bush and Reaney. *(Sarah Zorn) 651/266-6570)*

Commissioner Kramer said that there were issues involving the property lines and encroachments on the adjoining property. The Committee further discussed those issues with the HRA staff, and the resolution addresses the encroachment issues. Since the Zoning Committee cannot transfer property between two parties, the recommendation of the Committee is that the applicant (HRA) continues to seek a portion of the lot either by easement or purchase or, failing that, that they remove existing encroachments. It's the goal of this nonconforming use permit to try and bring the property closer to conformance, but that is not a requirement of the nonconforming use permit. So the new condition still tries to achieve conformance, but also sets out an alternative method of compliance.

Commissioner Thao asked if this would allow the construction workers to continue to work on the site in addition to the HRA trying to obtain a portion of the property.

Commissioner Kramer said yes.

MOTION: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the re- establishment of legal nonconforming use subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

#11-252-494 Dee Vang – Re-establishment of nonconforming use as a 4 plex. 342 Bates Avenue SE corner at 5th. (Matt Wolff, 651/266-6708)

MOTION: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the re- establishment of legal nonconforming use subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#10-915-026 Culvers – Conditional Use Permit for a fast food restaurant with drive-through service, and modification of standards for ingress and egress on Pascal Street. (Anton Jerve, 651/266-6567)

A revised site plan, which relates to both the conditional use permit and the sit plan cases, was distributed to the commissioners.

Tom Beach, (DSI) Department of Safety and Inspections, gave an overview of the changes.

Commissioner Perrus raised safety questions for the two parking spots coming off the University Avenue driveway on the west side.

Mr. Beach said there was some discussion at the Zoning Committee, and the plan that was submitted kept those spaces. But those spaces could be relocated to another part of the site, so that there would be fewer people pulling in and out of parking spaces near the driveway.

Upon a further question by Commissioner Perrus, Mr. Beach stated that the parking space layout was reviewed by Public Works, and they did not raise any concerns about these spaces.

Commissioner Ochs expressed concern with the location of the handicap parking on the other side of a main ingress/egress route. He asked if there are any ADA requirements about location of handicap parking.

Mr. Beach said the ADA regulations state they need to be as close as practical or possible to the entrance to the building. They do not talk about having them across a drive lane. It would be better to have them right up against the building, but a situation where you have to cross a drive lane is not uncommon.

Commissioner Ochs concurs with Commissioner Perrus on the location of the two parking spaces off the University entrance. Commissioner Ochs also asked if there requirements for the number of cars in a queue for the drive through.

Mr. Beach said the requirement for fast food restaurants is to have spaces for 5 or 6 cars, and this drive through is in compliance.

Commissioner Schertler asked about alley access where there is residential property at the back.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said the Zoning Code does allow for commercial access to an alley when it is shared with residential if a number of conditions are met, including not creating a hazardous condition and consistency with an area plan that recommends reducing curb cuts on University to make it more pedestrian friendly.

Commissioner Schertler expressed concern about the driveway and alley curb cuts being so close together. He wondered whether just one could be used.

Anton Jerve, PED staff explained that it is a condition of the fast food CUP that there be no alley access with residential across the alley. This is a citywide requirement. This distance modification for the ingress/egress is consistent with modifications that have been given to other fast food restaurants along University.

Mr. Beach added that the presence of existing buildings limits where driveways could be put on the side streets, and having these driveways is preferable to sending the traffic out to the alley, which is not wide.

Ms. Drummond said that Commissioner Schertler highlights a very important issue that will continue to come up along University as redevelopment happens. There are tradeoffs, and issues with how the residential garages are oriented, the width of the alley, and the condition of the alley. For new developments there is a setback requirement that is now recommended as part of the TN requirements. It would require more of a setback from the rear so there will be more space for alley circulation.

Commissioner Wang stated she would like to see the fence along the sidewalk moved to where the edge of where the cars stack up -- something to encourage a sense of a wider sidewalk for the public. She also asked about outdoor seating.

Ms. Drummond explained that as part of the Central Corridor Zoning Study recommendations there is a requirement that new development be set back a minimum of 4feet through an easement given to the city or the property owner's landscaping.

Mr. Beach added that outdoor seating was discussed but in the end there was no room for it.

Commissioner Nelson stated he was reluctantly voting for this sit plan, mainly because of the difficulty of putting an auto oriented use along University Avenue. The Culvers operator said that they would typically be looking for 84 parking spaces; there are only 53 parking spaces on this entire site. This might mean that there will be more drive through users at this site because there is nowhere to park. The drive through does not seem like a good use of land in this area. In addition about 40% of the existing buildings are being demolished, reducing the floor area ratio.

He is concerned that the zoning code not count accessory parking areas in a building as square footage in floor area ratio calculations. He is hopeful there won't be anything like this again, because this particular property was caught between the interim zoning and the new zoning regulations.

Commissioner Spaulding said that tearing down building space in some ways results in a net reduction of density. That is a problem because the goal in the Central Corridor is to go in the opposite direction. He was concerned that landscaping was double counted: 15% of the parking area has to be landscaped green space and that same amount was counted again as a FAR bonus under the interim zoning ordinance. Density and FAR are going to be important considerations for future zoning cases in the Central Corridor. He also stated he would like to have the decorative fence moved back at least the 4 feet, which would be in line with the current ordinance, or at least provide that flexibility to the developer.

Mr. Beach stated he agreed with that observation and staff can tell the developer to move the fence back 4feet. However, the fence is required under the zoning code for parking areas.

Ms. Drummond added that staff Anton Jerve will be preparing a memo providing more background on the issue of the FAR and how it is counted and what changed from the overlay to the new zoning in place now.

Anton Jerve, PED staff, clarified that if these buildings were demolished today and rebuilt; there could be a fast food with a drive through on this site under the new TN/CC Zoning Study. He explained that the floor area definition in the zoning code has been in place since 1975, unchanged. The definition of floor area is something that can be looked at, but it would affect projects citywide. He also explained that there is a requirement for interior landscaping under the parking requirements of 15 square feet for every 100 square feet of parking area. Under the zoning code that does not include perimeter landscaping. This site plan has about 25% interior landscaping. The Central Corridor Overlay provided some flexibility in meeting the 1.0 FAR. This project re-uses existing buildings, but removes rear portions. One portion of the eastern building was usable floor area, as defined in the Zoning Code, and that had to be replaced elsewhere on the site in order to keep the site from becoming more nonconforming. Under the overlay, landscaping can be used to count toward floor area.

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 13-1 (Ochs) on a voice vote.*

#11-251-397 (#10-909-016) Midway Commons – Site Plan Review for renovation of two existing commercial buildings, addition of drive-through sales and service, and parking lot reconfiguration. 1489 University Avenue West. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review subject to additional conditions.*

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: *Commissioner Spaulding moved to amend the motion to encourage staff to determine the appropriate place for the fence along the drive through. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

The main motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Kramer announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, August 25, 2011.

V. **Historic Preservation in Saint Paul** – Informational presentation on work of Heritage Preservation Commission and staff. (*Christine Boulware, 651/266-6715*)

Christina Boulware, HPC staff gave an informational power point presentation on the work of the Heritage Preservation Commission and staff.

Commissioner Thao agreed with the need for historic preservation but was concerned with how to balance that and the demographic needs, particularly with some of those east side cases. Those houses are great historically but they are just too small to house some of the families that need housing in the city. She asked how these needs were being balanced.

Ms. Boulware replied that designation doesn't freeze a property in time. Alterations and additions can happen in ways that are sympathetic to the character of the building and the neighborhood. The HPC doesn't look at the use of a building, but would review impacts the use may have on the exterior

Commissioner Connolly asked if the proposed demolition delay would be for every proposed demolition in the city or just in designated historic areas?

Ms. Boulware said yes, every proposed demolition. Commissioner Connolly replied that it is a big over reach.

Commissioner Connolly stated that historic preservation to him is like motherhood, kittens and butterflies, but how much is enough? He gave a comparison about the number of players in the baseball Hall of Fame. The more designation you do, the less that all of it means. He asked whether there was a limit or quota for the number of designated historic structures.

Ms. Boulware said that structures have to meet certain criteria to be designated. The broadening of the definition of preservation has changed to look at context and social fabric. In the 70's and early 80's when things were surveyed and designated, people looked at what were the best materials and what were the biggest houses, but they did not necessarily look into the contribution of the people who built the houses or lived there. With the most recent historic survey that was completed there was more consideration of people and social factors. For example, there is an area of brick workers cottages which related to the railroad industry. The survey looked at more than what's pretty, what's big, what's in the best condition, but who lived there and what impact did it have on the social fabric of Saint Paul. It's looking at preservation more broadly than what was looked at 30-years ago. Aside from that, there seven criteria for local designation and a building or district would need to demonstrate that it merits designation. Saint Paul hasn't designated many buildings or districts in the past decade. In the last thirteen years, there have only been two historic districts and three individual sites locally designated. The historic districts have or are being certified eligible for listing on the National Register in order to take advantage of Federal and State Historic Tax Credits.

Commissioner Thao said that although it isn't reviewed by the HPC, the church on East 7th Street painted the building red by accident.

Ms. Boulware said that's an example of how they do look at painting under certain circumstances. In general, buildings that have unpainted masonry should not be painted. A lot of times it adds more of a maintenance issue for the building but also if it is painted with the wrong type of paint that can cause some major structural damage, because it traps water and moisture behind the brick.

Commissioner Fernandez questioned the House of Hope Church and their fence which had recently received press. He stated that he did not see that any people that sit on the Heritage Preservation Commission are number crunchers or specialize in historic preservation on the contracting end. How is the economic feasibility of rehabilitating a building considered? An example is the Old Home building,. The real estate agent says that building is going to cost too much money to preserve and that is why they want to tear it down.

Ms. Boulware said that she is the staff that approved that fence for House of Hope. She noted that there are few staff and many permits to review and that she made a mistake and approved that application too quickly without looking at it as closely as she should have. As far as economic feasibility, there is no provision for economic hardship in the current ordinance. The commission has weighed the option of using different materials that vary the cost of a project. When it comes to demolition, the commission does review numbers for rehabilitation and stabilization. She indicated that she had not seen or reviewed a historic structure report or feasibility study on reuse for the Old Home Foods buildings and could not comment on how much it would cost to rehabilitate versus the cost of demolition. The building was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and tax credits could be available fore rehabilitation of the building.

Commissioner Spaulding said that Ms. Boulware talked about how small area plans and other plans will now go through an evaluation by the Heritage Preservation Commission. Having a historic preservation chapter in the Comprehensive Plan certainly helps, but are there other ways that the Planning Commission can better interact with the HPC and be more helpful?

Ms. Boulware said that they are just beginning to better coordinate planning with heritage preservation and she appreciated the comment.

Ms. Drummond said that what has been outlined already is a step in the right direction and having a chapter in the Comprehensive Plan for preservation is highlighting that. There is a Historic Preservation section in the new template for small area plans. Designations for historic districts or sites go through the Planning Commission for comment as to conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Historic preservation will become more visible in the work of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Kramer asked about the house shown on Sims Avenue in the powerpoint presentation, saying that he drove by that house and at the time when that came up more then half of that block of Sims Avenue was vacant. Ms. Boulware stated that there were eight vacant Category 3 buildings on that block at that time.

Commissioner Kramer said that they have taken the need to deal with vacant buildings and put neighborhoods at odds with historic preservation because they are living next to some building that is in bad shape versus the need for historic preservation and it's not difficult to see where these arguments end up. Two neighborhood goals get pitted against each other.

Ms. Boulware said the area between Payne and Greenbrier from Jenks, Case and Sims all along there has been identified as part of the Swedish context of that neighborhood and had a large number of pattern book houses. The 1983 historic sites survey identified a potential historic district there. Now because of the loss of all those buildings they no longer have the opportunity for that historic district.

Commissioner Oliver asked what it would take to allow consideration of economic factors in decisions of staff or the HPC. One of the problems he hears about is that the historic standards are good in places like Summit Avenue but in Dayton's Bluff it's keeping people from fixing their houses. People who are in those houses cannot afford to do anything with the exteriors, because they can't afford the things that are necessary to comply with the standards. He added that he hears complaints about that all the time. Every neighborhood is different and we can't have the same standards that apply in the wealthiest neighborhoods also apply throughout the rest of the city because people do not have those resources.

Ms. Boulware said that not every property requires an architect to do any work. Also, no one is required to make changes unless they propose changes. Then if they are making changes they need to comply with the guidelines. So if the difference is between restoring the wood siding versus putting on vinyl siding, historic guidelines indicate that the wood siding should be maintained because that's what was prevalent. But there is a provision in the guidelines that says if the property is non-contributing or constructed after the period of significance, then vinyl siding may be appropriate. There are options within the guidelines. Condition of materials is considered.

Ms. Boulware ended by saying that the Twin Cities was chosen to participate in Partners for Preservation which is a program by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with American Express. One million dollars will be available for preservation projects and the public will vote for the sites starting in September. Voting will take place on Facebook.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

No report.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Wencil reported that at their last meeting they discussed various amendments to the nonconforming use sections of the zoning code. The next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, August 24, 2011 has been cancelled.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Spaulding reported that at their last meeting two weeks ago they discussed the Jefferson Avenue Bikeway, which will eventually be coming before the Planning Commission. There have been a lot of improvements already on the bikeway from one end to the other, but

there is one part of that project that remains undecided. This is a diverter at Cleveland that would allow bikes to go through that intersection continuously on Jefferson but not cars. That has met with some resistance from the neighbors. There's been a test pilot project of that diverter and the results from that was a fairly split opinion on whether it was a good idea or not. It also resulted in some increased traffic on the side streets, so there's been concern from neighbors about that. The committee did not do anything formal but left the people in attendance with the understanding that as representatives of the neighborhood they need to come back to the committee with some kind of proposal on how they are going to advance Jefferson as a bicycle corridor and fulfill the terms of the grant. Also, the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, August 22, 2011 has been cancelled.

IX. Communications Committee

No report.

X. Task Force Reports

None.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved _____
(Date)

Anthony Fernandez
Secretary of the Planning Commission



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

Telephone: 651-266-8989
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Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY Aug 30, 2011
2nd Floor Conference Room
375 Jackson Street, Suite 218

<u>Time</u>	<u>Project Name and Location</u>
9:30	Scusi Parking Lot New parking lot (mostly paved already) 1820 St Clair Ave.

To Applicants:

You should plan to attend this meeting.

At this meeting you will have a chance to discuss the site plan for your project with Saint Paul's Site Plan Review Committee. The Committee is made up of City staff from Zoning, Traffic, Sewers, Water, Public Works, Fire, and Parks. You are encouraged to bring your engineer, architect, or contractor with you to handle any technical questions raised by city staff.

The purpose of this meeting is to simplify the review process by letting the applicant meet with staff from a number of departments at one time. Staff will make comments and ask questions based on their review of the plans. By the end of the meeting you will know if the site plan can be approved as submitted or if revisions will be required. Staff will take minutes at the meeting and send you a copy.

Parking

Parking is available at on-street meters. Some off-street parking spaces are available in our visitor parking lot off of 6th Street at Jackson.

To see a map of additional nearby parking ramps go to
<http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/dsi/liep/info/location.html>

If you have any questions, please call Mary Montgomery at 651-266-9088 or
mary.montgomery@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

*revised 8/15/11

**AGENDA
ZONING COMMITTEE
OF THE SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION
Thursday, August 25, 2011 3:30 P.M.
City Council Chambers, Room #300
Third Floor City Hall - Saint Paul, Minnesota**

NOTE: The order in which the items appear on this agenda is not necessarily the order in which they will be heard at the meeting. The Zoning Committee will determine the order of the agenda at the beginning of its meeting.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 11, 2011, ZONING COMMITTEE MINUTES

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications (Tom Beach, 651-266-9086)

NEW BUSINESS

- 1 11-255-877 Rolando Aguilar et al**
Rezoning from RT1 Two-Family Residential to T2 Traditional Neighborhood
833 York Ave, NE corner of Arcade at York
RT1
Luis Pereira 651-266-6591

- 2 11-260-156 Meridian Industrial Appeal**
Appeal to Planning Commission by Union Park District Council of staff decision made on
July 20, 2011 to approve site plan.
650 Pelham Blvd
I1
Tom Beach 651-266-9086

ADJOURNMENT

ZONING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Call Patricia James at 266-6639 or Samantha Langer at 266-6550 if you are unable to attend the meeting.

APPLICANT: You or your designated representative must attend this meeting to answer any questions that the committee may have.



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700
Facsimile: 651-228-3220

DATE: August 26, 2011
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Zoning Committee
SUBJECT: Results of August 25, 2011 Zoning Committee Hearing

NEW BUSINESS

		<u>Staff</u>	<u>Recommendation</u> <u>Committee</u>
1.	Rolando Aguilar et al (11-255-877) Rezoning from RT1 Two-Family Residential to T2 Traditional Neighborhood	Approval	Approval (6 - 0)

Address: 833 York Ave
NE corner Arcade at York

District Comment: District 5 recommended approval

Support: 0 people spoke, 1 letter

Opposition: 0 people spoke, 0 letters

Hearing: Hearing is closed

Motion: Approval

		<u>Staff</u>	<u>Recommendation</u> <u>Committee</u>
2.	Meridian Industrial Appeal (11-260-156) Appeal to PC by Union Park District Council of staff decision made on July 20, 2011 to approve the site plan.	Denial	Denial (5 - 0)

Address: 650 Pelham Blvd

District Comment: District 12 recommended approval

Support: 3 people spoke, 6 letters

Opposition: 3 people spoke, 3 letters

Hearing: Hearing is closed

Motion: Denial

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

WHEREAS, the Union Park District Council has filed an appeal (# 11-260-156) of a decision by the Zoning Administrator to approve a site plan submitted by Industrial Equities LLP for an office/warehouse building (# 10-906716), on property located at 650 Pelham Blvd, Parcel Identification Number (PIN) 322923210029, legally described as Geo H Watsons Rearrangement Subj To Blvd And Hwy The W 225 Ft Of Blk B under the provisions of Section 67.701.b the Saint Paul Legislative Code; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission, on August 25, 2011, held a public hearing at which all persons present were given an opportunity to be heard pursuant to said application in accordance with the requirements of §61.303 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, based on the evidence presented to its Zoning Committee at the public hearing as substantially reflected in the minutes, made the following findings of fact:

1. The appeal filed by Union Park District Council begins by listing four main issues as the basis for the appeal:
 - "The site plan is not consistent with planning documents for the site", including the Central Corridor Development Strategy, Raymond Station Area Plan, and Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.
 - The City Code encourages buildings to "hold the corner" on sites at intersections.
 - There was no community design process to effectively resolve community concerns with the project.
 - The City Council did not zone the site TN as recommended in planning documents."

The appeal continues with a section describing how Union Park believes the plan is not consistent with provisions from a number of City planning documents.

The appeal concludes with a request that the Planning Commission requires that the site plan be designed to conform to the following standards that address Union Parks concerns:

- Buildings should hold the corners at Pelham and Wabash; there should not be more than 15 feet between the sidewalk and any building

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

- Sidewalks should be installed on both Pelham and Wabash.
 - Buildings should have façade articulation consistent with the historic district at Pelham and University
 - Any parking spaces should be behind the building or underground to reduce pervious pavement and encourage the use of public transportation, especially the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit.
 - There should be at least two occupied stories on any building at the site
 - Windows adjacent to the streets should be prominent and perpetuate a storefront
 - Doorways should be located close to street and emphasized architecturally
 - Incorporate artistic elements reflective of the Creative Enterprise artists
 - Increased building density
 - Mixed commercial and industrial use at the site
 - Design any building at the site to facilitate and encourage the growth and expansion of our local industry and buildings. First opportunity for tenants at the site should be local businesses looking to expand. Confirm tenants for the building prior to construction.
2. The site plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Raymond Station Area Plan and other City plans.

The zoning code does not require a building at this location to “hold the corner”.

A community design process is not a requirement of site plan review.

The Planning Commission and the City Council both voted to retain the I1 zoning for the property and not change it to T4.

A more detailed response to specific issues raised in the appeal is provided in attached Exhibit A.

3. The site plan complies with zoning standards and all other applicable ordinances of the City.

Office/warehouse is a permitted use in I1. One-story buildings are permitted in I1. The building and site conform to Citywide design standards. The site plan meets the standards for stormwater set by the City and the Capitol Region Watershed. The developer submitted a Traffic Impact Study for the project which was reviewed and approved by Saint Paul Public Works. The site plan meets zoning standards for landscaping.

4. The site plan is consistent with traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience if the following conditions are added to the site plan approval issued by the Zoning Administrator.
- An additional pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk on Pelham to the southwest corner of the building must be constructed.
 - A public sidewalk must be provided on the south side of Wabash if City staff determines that a sidewalk can be provided that is consistent with pedestrian safety in light of the existing nearby railroad track.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, under the authority of the City's Legislative Code, that the appeal filed by the Union Park District Council of a decision by the Zoning Administrator to approve a site plan submitted by Industrial Equities LLP for an office/warehouse building (# 10-906716), on property located at 650 Pelham Blvd is hereby denied; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the site plan is approved with the following additional conditions:

1. An additional pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk on Pelham to the southwest corner of the building must be constructed.
2. A public sidewalk must be provided on the south side of Wabash if City staff determines that it is possible to provide both street trees and a sidewalk that is consistent with pedestrian safety in light of the existing nearby railroad track.

Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: 7/11/11

Project Name	Red Rock Station Area Plan
Geographic Scope	½ mile radius around the existing Lower Afton Park and Ride site (bounded by Point Douglas, Lower Afton, and Highway 61)
Ward(s)	7
District Council(s)	1
Project Description	Planning for proposed future Commuter Rail Station Area. The plan addresses multi-modal transportation access, market potential, platform location, and cultural, historical, and environmental context. Long-term plans include a low-profile 275-stall parking facility north of Lower Afton, and a ped bridge over Highway 61 to the rail platform. The plan also calls for restoring/enhancing green space, as well as connecting to local and regional trails and parks.
Project Contact	Christina Morrison, PED
Contact email/phone	Christina.morrison@ci.stpaul.mn.us , 651-266-6546
Lead Agency/Department	Washington County
Purpose of Project/Plan	Public purpose is to plan for improved transit in the corridor starting with expanded bus service and then eventually transitioning to commuter rail.
Planning References	Red Rock Commuter Rail Feasibility Study (2001), Red Rock Corridor AA (2007), MnDOT Commuter Rail System Plan (1999), Met Council TPP (2008), Red Rock Commuter Bus Feasibility Plan (2009), Comp Plan(2010)
Project stage	Post Alternative Analysis (AA) planning
General Timeline	Station Area Planning adopted by Fall 2011.
District Council position (if applicable)	Not yet available
Level of Committee Involvement	Inform, advise & consent.
Previous Committee action	Introductory presentation on 1/24/11. No action.
Level of Public Involvement	Inform, advise & consent. Public Meetings held in August 2010, January 2011, and April 2011.
Public Hearing	September 2, 2011 at 8:30 am
Public Hearing Location	Planning Commission, City Hall room 40
Primary Funding Source(s)	Federal 5339 Funds, Local (WCRRA, DCRRA, RCRRA, CTIB grant)
Cost	\$1.15 Million for all station area plans & process

Staff recommendation	Release document to the public and schedule a public hearing at Planning Commission on 9/2/11
Action item requested of the Committee	Recommend to release for a public hearing
Committee recommendation	Approved releasing for Public Hearing on 9/2/11 at Planning Commission
Committee vote	7-0

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RED ROCK CORRIDOR COMMUTER RAIL
LOWER AFTON

LOCATION & CONTEXT

AERIAL & SITE PHOTOS



Lower Afton Station Area (St. Paul)
Aerial Photo - 1/2 Mile Radius

PARAMETERS / CONTEXT

- The current Park & Ride lot is bounded on the west by Highway 61, on the north by Lower Afton Road and on the east by Point Douglas Road. There is a recently constructed high capacity storm sewer infrastructure located south of the existing Park & Ride lot.
- These roadways limit the space available to expand the parking lot in its current location. There is little potential for new development.
- The toe of the bluff east of the Park & Ride/Point Douglas Road limits any significant development opportunities due to the severe slope and regulatory protections.
- There are significant Right-of-Way setbacks, easements and regulatory limitations surrounding the Park & Ride Site.
- The train tracks are west of Hwy 61, the Park & Ride is east of Hwy 61; Crossing Hwy 61 by pedestrians will be a significant issue.
- There are Native American Burial Mounds adjacent to the existing Park & Ride lot.
- Long-term expectations for parking demand is 275 stalls.

IDENTIFIERS

- The current Park & Ride facility is operating at or over capacity. Metro Transit is currently considering how best to expand the Park & Ride facilities.
- There is little opportunity for any significant real estate development. Zoning and comprehensive planning work restricts density and land uses in the area.
- The primary effort will be to: resolve vehicular and pedestrian access to the Park & Ride facility, accommodate additional Park & Ride capacity on the site, provide access across Highway 61 to/from the Park & Ride, locate the Commuter Rail platform in a location acceptable to all parties, and provide a safe and secure parking facility for transit customers.
- There are no existing trail connections to Pig's Eye Regional Park & Pig's Eye Lake, however, community plans identify future connections as a priority.

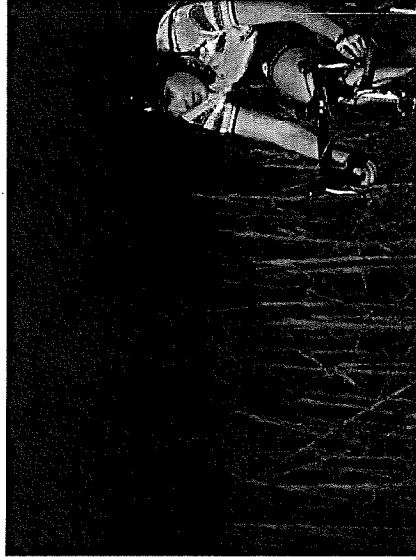
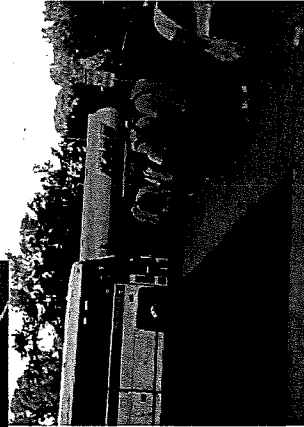
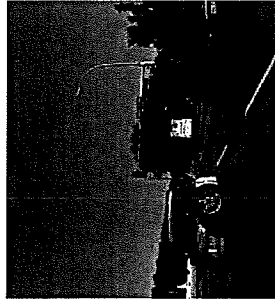
TECHNICAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

TRAFFIC & ACCESS

The existing Lower Afton Park & Ride currently functions over capacity as a 114-space Park & Ride lot southeast of the intersection of Highway 61 at Lower Afton Road in St. Paul. The surface lot accesses Point Douglas Road with two driveways.

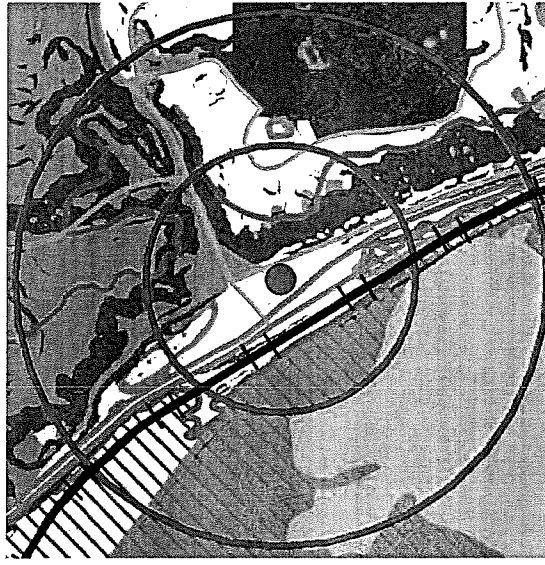
The following shows a list of signalized intersections in the study area. All other intersections are side-stop controlled.

- Highway 61 at Lower Afton Road – Signalized
- Lower Afton Road at McKnight Road – Signalized
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) long range plans do not include any improvements to Lower Afton Road or Point Douglas Road



Planned Off Road Bike Trail

Plans for an off-road bike and pedestrian trail were approved in Spring 2011. The facility is expected to be constructed in the Fall of 2011 on the north side of Lower Afton Road, from Point Douglas Road to McKnight Road. This trail will provide new bicycle and pedestrian connections to the St. Paul Mississippi River Regional Trail and the existing on-street bikeway on Point Douglas Road.



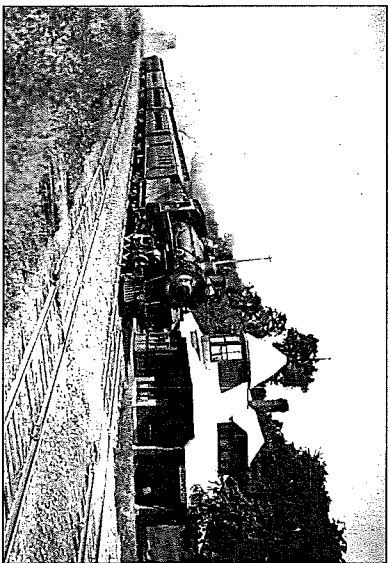
ENVIRONMENTAL

The station is located in the Urban Open Space District of the Mississippi River Critical Area. Pigs Eye Lake Park and Battle Creek Park are considered 4(f) properties. More detailed information is available in the Study Area Inventory and Analysis Technical Report.

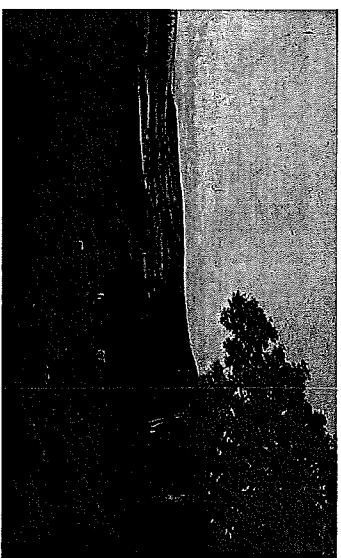
TECHNICAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY, CONTINUED

CULTURAL & HISTORICAL

The Battle Creek/Highwood area of St. Paul was once the location of the Highwood Passenger Rail Station. There are Native American Burial Mounds located to the southeast of the existing Park & Ride Facility.



Highwood Station, ca. 1901



"St. Paul from Pig's Eye," James Desnoes-Larson (1888).

MARKET ASSESSMENT

Lower Afton Station Area Characteristics

- Excellent access from Hwy 61
- Limited controls at Lower Afton Rd and Frontage Rd can make turning at peak times difficult
- High visibility from Hwy 61
- Highway, railroad, and river are barriers to the west
- Parkland to the north
- Low density residential to the east
- Sleep bluff
- Very little commercial development nearby

Lower Afton Station Area Development Potential

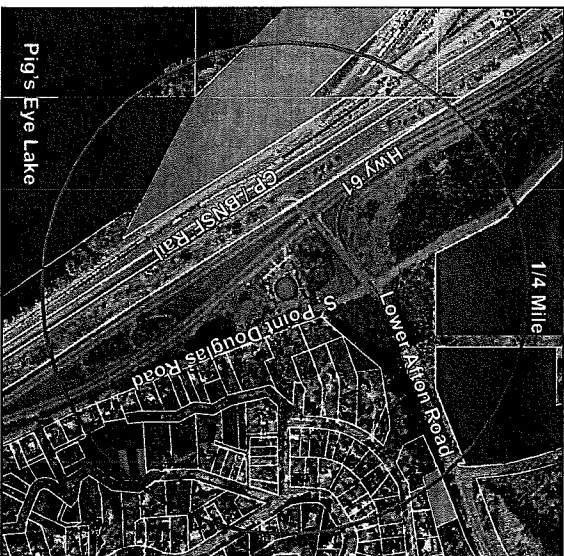
- Limited development potential (i.e. small scale convenience retail, a trail head with bike rental, etc.)
- Numerous physical constraints
- Limited available land, reduces flexibility
- Any new use would be sharp contrast to existing character
- North side of Lower Afton Road has the most development potential, but still very limited



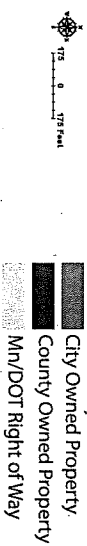
Single family residential homes, many Victorian, line the toe of the bluff along Point Douglas Road

OWNERSHIP PATTERNS / LAND USE / REGULATORY / POLICY

The site is near Battle Creek Regional Park, Pig's Eye Lake and is in the Mississippi River Critical Area. Ownership/Land Use is largely public R.O.W., single family residential, parks, and CPBNSF R.O.W.



Lower Afton Station Area (St. Paul) - Property Ownership Near Station Site



RAIL ANALYSIS

Lower Afton Station

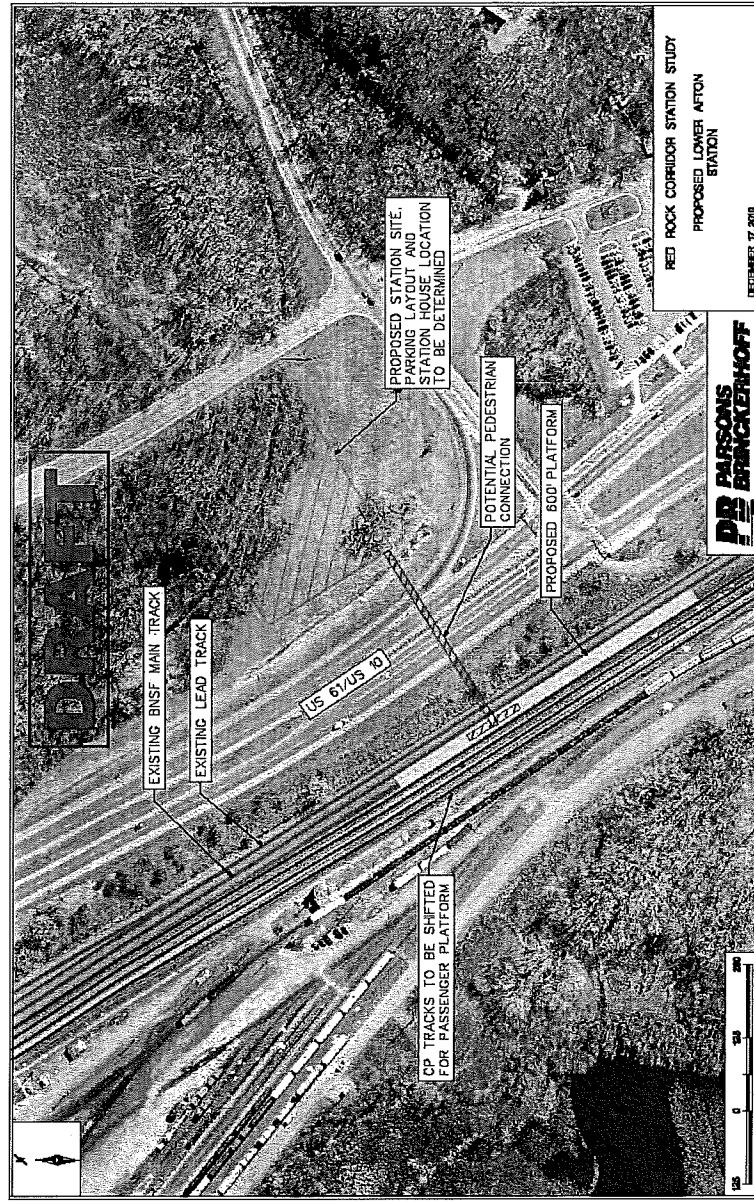
The preferred location for the station platform is directly across from the proposed Park & Ride structure on the north side of Lower Afton Road. However, there are two major operational challenges at this location:

1. Highway 61 is located between the parking lot and the tracks.
2. The locations of existing and proposed tracks in the area create challenges with the platform location. Also, freight rail activities in the area limit the possible platform locations.

The first challenge can be addressed by the construction of a grade separated pedestrian overpass to provide passenger access from the park & ride lot to the track platform.

According to initial findings from the East Metro Rail Capacity Study, still underway at the time of publication of this report, the proposed platform location would involve shifting of some tracks in the area to create enough space in between main tracks to allow for a center platform with vertical circulation. Although this option might initially be more labor intensive to construct, it provides the most flexibility for operations in the congested area as requested by the railroads.

The constraints at the Lower Afton site are not simply resolved by this solution. Further, and possibly extensive, consideration is required involving both rail operators (BNSF and CP) and the overall Red Rock corridor initiative. We suggest that for station planning purposes, a solution(s) that flexibly accommodate this platform option be considered if possible.



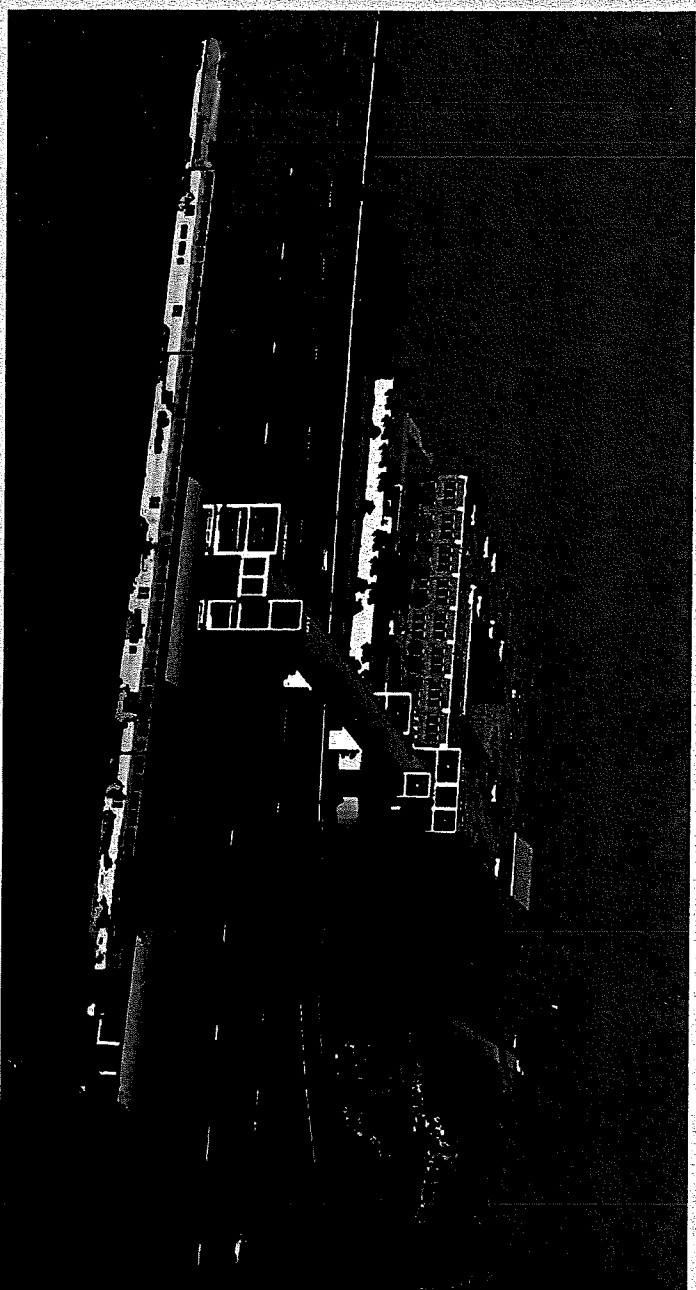
STATION AREA PLANS & VISION

STATION AREA VISION

The planning approach to the Lower Afton Station area is to provide expanded Park & Ride capacity in a context-sensitive design that maintains the environmental integrity of the area.

The commuter rail Park & Ride facilities will be located east of Hwy 61 which will require a grade separated connection from the park & ride facility to the rail platform. Currently, bus riders use the crosswalk to get to the bus stop on the west side of Highway 61. Although this meets safety standards, there are ongoing concerns about pedestrians crossing at grade here because of the volume and speed of traffic on Highway 61 and due to pedestrians crossing outside of the crosswalk. Either a tunnel or a bridge would improve safety and comfort of riders crossing Highway 61. An overhead bridge is recommended for planning purposes because it is perceived to be safer and more inviting than a tunnel and the topography lends itself to an overhead crossing.

Little to no development is possible under zoning guidelines but there may be opportunities to use the parking facility as a gateway element into Battle Creek Regional Park. This small "welcome center" could provide information and orientation, rentals and convenience services to visitors to the park as well as to commuters. Connections to trails, stormwater management and landscaping will be primary considerations to create a facility that complements the neighborhood while serving the needs of commuters.

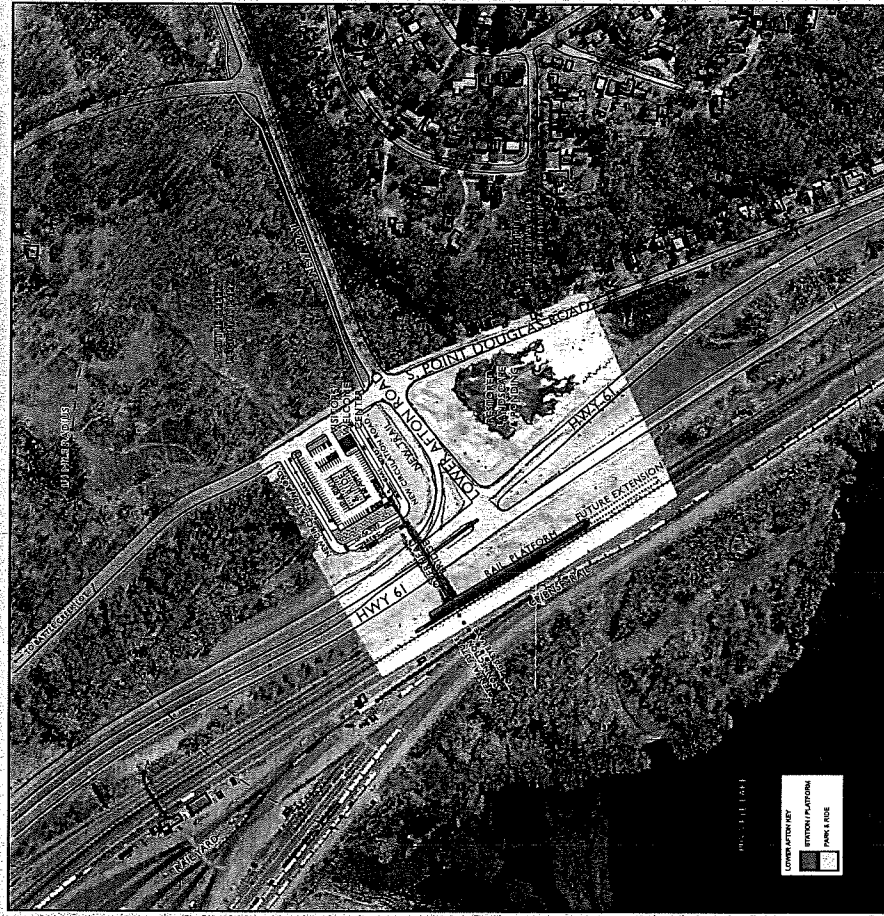


BIRDS-EYE VIEW LOOKING EAST

Lower Afton Station Area Planning Principles

- Connect to existing trails and parks
- Incorporate sustainability where possible
- Existing infrastructure will provide the framework for new infrastructure
- Restore and repair the landscape
- Create an intermodal hub and gateway to Battle Creek Park

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN - LONG TERM



LOWER AFTON LONG TERM AREA CONCEPT PLAN (YEAR 2040+)

North Option for Park & Ride Location is Strongly Preferred, Recommended

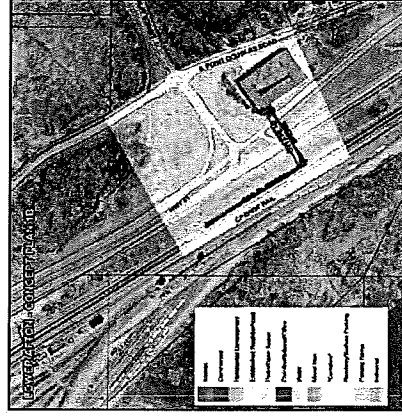
Early community engagement revealed a desire by local residents and City staff to consider shifting Park & Ride facilities to the ROW on the north side of Lower Afton Road rather than expanding the existing facilities south of Lower Afton. Preliminary analysis of both sites revealed several advantages to locating an expanded Park & Ride facility north of Lower Afton Road including:

- Ramp at this site would help to alleviate concerns over siting Park & Ride facilities too close to residential uses along South Point Douglas Road
- The geometry of the available ROW is more regular and greater on the north option allowing for a more efficient ramp design
- The steeply sloping topography would allow a structured facility to be tucked in to the hillside thus greatly reducing visual impact in the largely natural landscape
- No sensitive cultural resources would be impacted
- Access into the site in AM peak times will be easier for most commuters, who are anticipated to be coming from the east on Lower Afton Rd

South Option for Park & Ride Location Lacks Support, Not Ideal

Preliminary explorations looking at siting the Park & Ride facilities south of Lower Afton Road on the site of the existing surface lot revealed significant community opposition and several other limiting factors including:

- Ramp at this site would be incompatible with and obstructive to residential uses along South Point Douglas Road
- The geometry of the available ROW is very limiting and reduces possibilities for an efficient ramp
- Sensitive cultural resources, burial mounds, would be adversely impacted
- An unsignalized intersection makes access in/out difficult during peak times

Lower Afton Station Area
Preliminary Concept Plan showing South Option

STATION AREA PLANS & VISION, CONTINUED

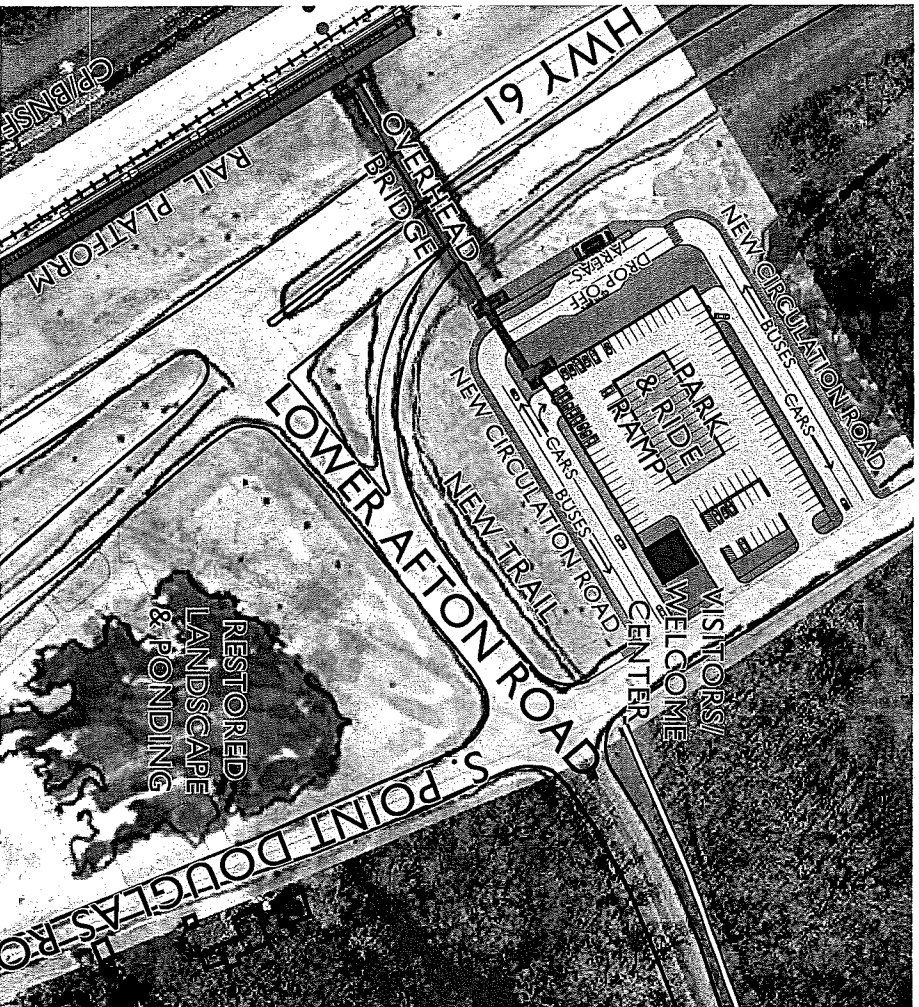
PARKING STRATEGY

The Lower Afton Park & Ride is unique in that it is the closest station to the downtowns. Due to its proximity to downtown St. Paul, it is likely that the vast majority of riders at this location would be commuting to downtown Minneapolis. This is consistent with travel patterns of current riders. A bus rider survey that was conducted as part of the station area planning study showed that of the 47 respondents that get on the bus at the Lower Afton Park & Ride, 100% of them were boarding the 365 to Minneapolis.

The Metropolitan Council Park & Ride plan forecasts a need for 190 stalls to meet 2030 capacity at the Lower Afton Park & Ride. 275 stalls was assumed for planning purposes. Connections with local circulator bus routes 350 and/or 363 should also be pursued.

The existing surface lot currently has 114 stalls and is operating over capacity. Metro Transit is currently studying the expansion of the Park & Ride facilities at Lower Afton Road and is considering how best to expand the Park & Ride facilities.

No new development is proposed at the Lower Afton site except for a small Visitor's Center attached to the Park & Ride. The parking requirement for the Visitor's Center was estimated to be 3 parking stalls according to city code, but 14 stalls were planned for preliminarily in order to accommodate users of the regional parks and trails.



Detailed plan of Park & Ride

Preserving Views and Protecting Nature

Unlike other transit stations along the Red Rock corridor, which emphasize transit oriented development, the Lower Afton station is focused on sensitively accommodating commuters while taking special care to preserve, restore, and enhance the natural elements of the site including the bluffs, parks, trails, and views of the Mississippi River valley and downtown St. Paul.



Existing view of downtown St. Paul from South Point Douglas Road

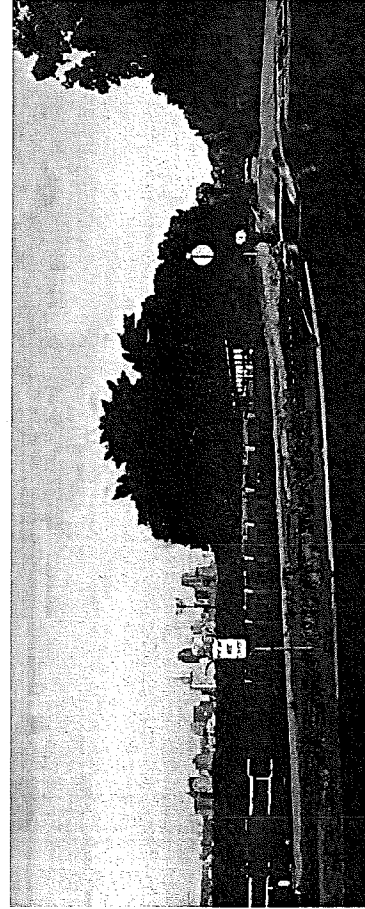
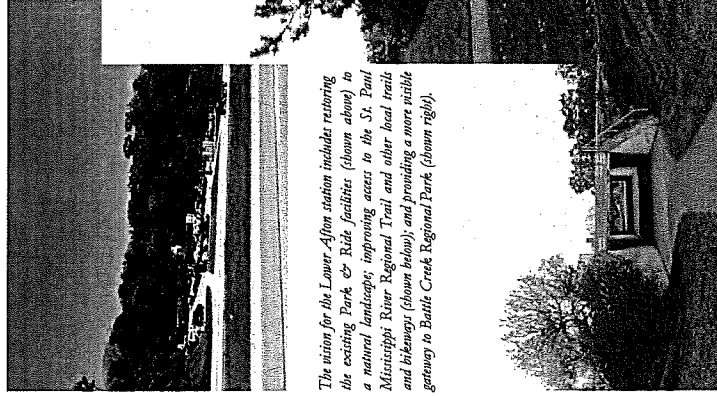


Illustration showing Park & Ride facilities nestled into sloping topography to preserve the viewshed to downtown St. Paul from South Point Douglas Road.

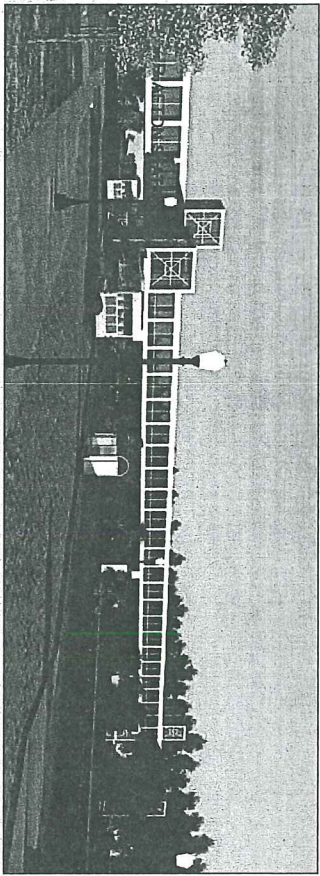


The vision for the Lower Afton station includes restoring the existing Park & Ride facilities (shown above) to a natural landscape; improving access to the St. Paul Mississippi River Regional Trail and other local trails and bikeways (shown below); and providing a more visible gateway to Battie Creek Regional Park (shown right).

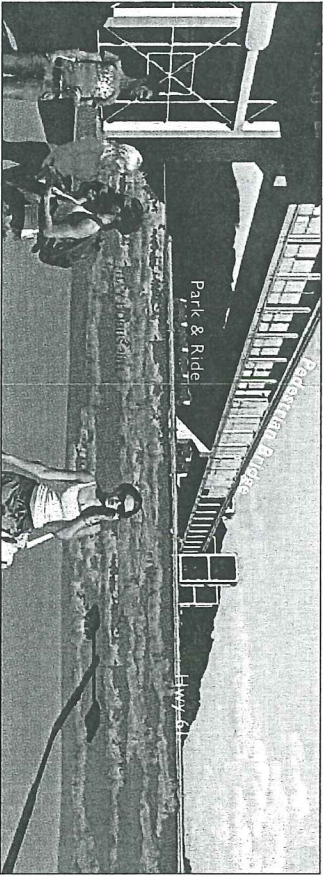
BATTLE CREEK REGIONAL PARK
TRAILS AND POND AREA
BATTLE CREEK TRAILING AND POND AREA

STATION AREA PLANS & VISION, CONTINUED

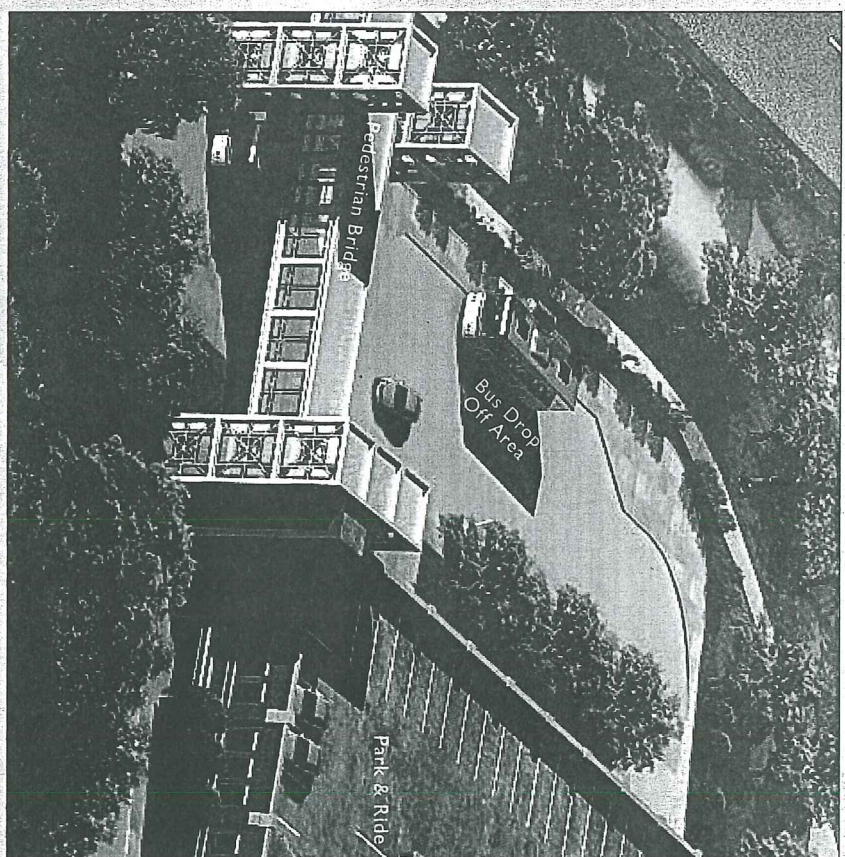
Additional Views and Illustrations



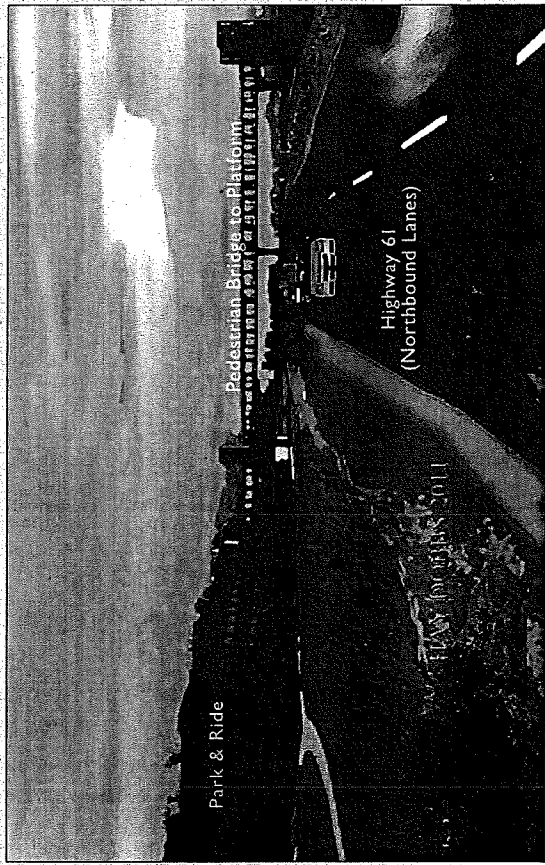
View looking south towards bus drop off area and pedestrian bridge.



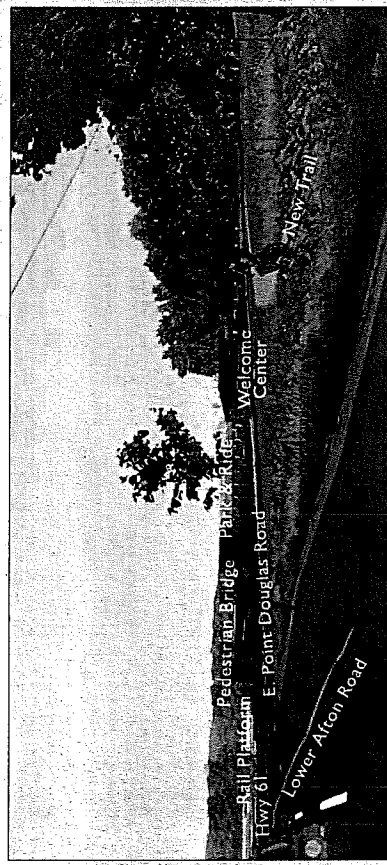
This view from the rail platform looking east shows the pedestrian bridge stretching over Highway 61, and the sloping topography throughout the station area.



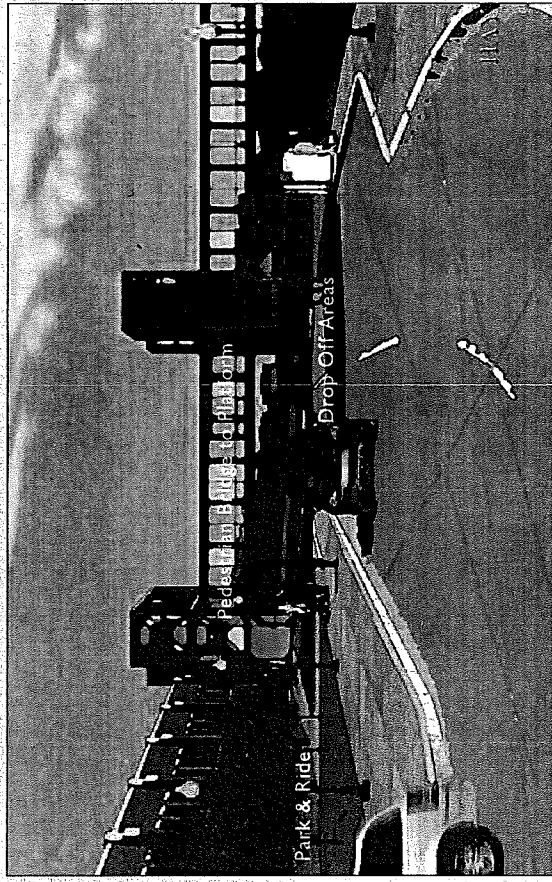
Aerial view looking north towards bus drop off



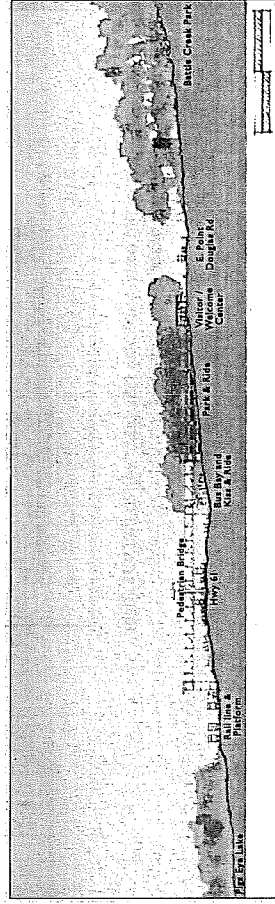
View of pedestrian bridge looking south from Highway 61



This view looking south from Lower Afton Road shows the new bike and pedestrian trail, the welcome center, the park & ride ramp, and the pedestrian bridge over the highway.

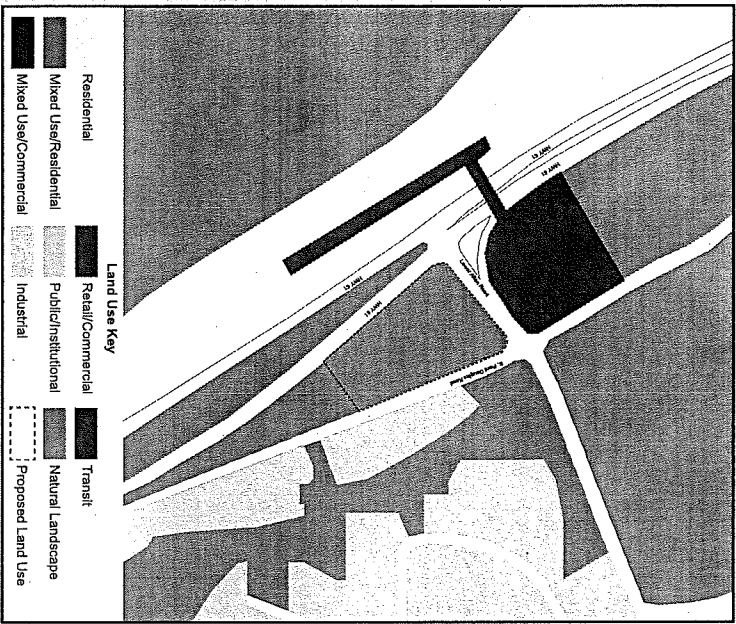


View of drop off area and pedestrian bridge to platform



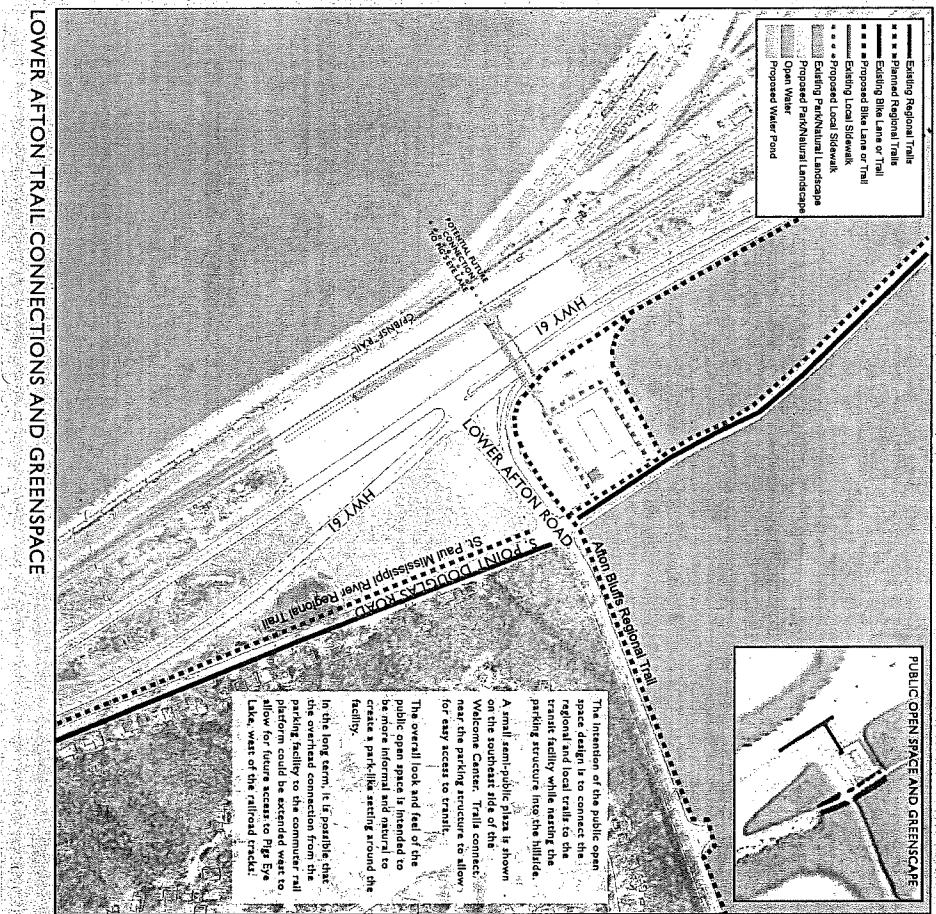
Cross section showing elevation changes from Battle Creek Park down to rail lines and platform

LAND USE PLAN

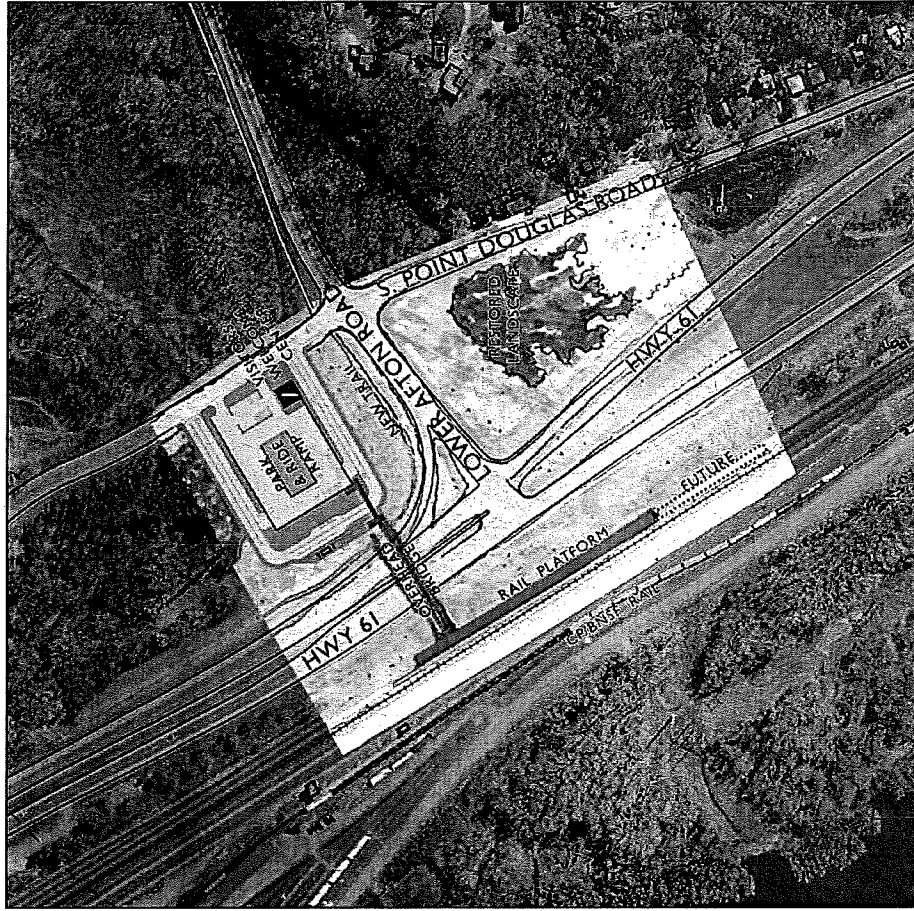


All proposed elements of the conceptual plan take place within MNDOT Right Of Way. No other land use changes are proposed.

TRAIL CONNECTIONS AND GREENSPACE



RECOMMENDED BUILDING HEIGHTS & TYPE (YEAR 2040)

Lower Afton
Final Concept Plan - North Option

Lower Afton - Building Scale & Type Summary*

Land Use Type	Building #	Footprint Area (SF)	# Stories	Total
Residential	-	-	-	- sf
Commercial	-	-	-	- sf
Mixed Use	-	-	-	- sf
Civic/Institutional/Office	1	1,625	1	1,625 sf
Industrial	-	-	-	- sf
Recommended Building Scale & Type Summary				
Residential				0 sf
Commercial				0 sf
Mixed Use				0 sf
Civic/Institutional/Office				1,625 sf
Industrial				-
# of Housing Units @ 1200sf each (2BR)				0 Housing Units
Job Growth Potential (@ 350sf per worker)				5 Jobs
Park & Ride (commuter demand)				275 Cars
Parking (new development demand)				14 Cars
Planning Study Focus Area (includes both North & South Option)				~ 13.4 Acres

*plans and calculations are conceptual, based on full build out projections for beyond the year 2040, and may shift as a result of on-going station area planning and programming efforts. Residential SF counts 100% toward Housing Units; Commercial, Civic, Institutional, Office, and Industrial SF counts 100% towards Job Growth, and Mixed Use SF counts 50% towards Housing Units and 50% towards Job Growth.

INVESTMENTS

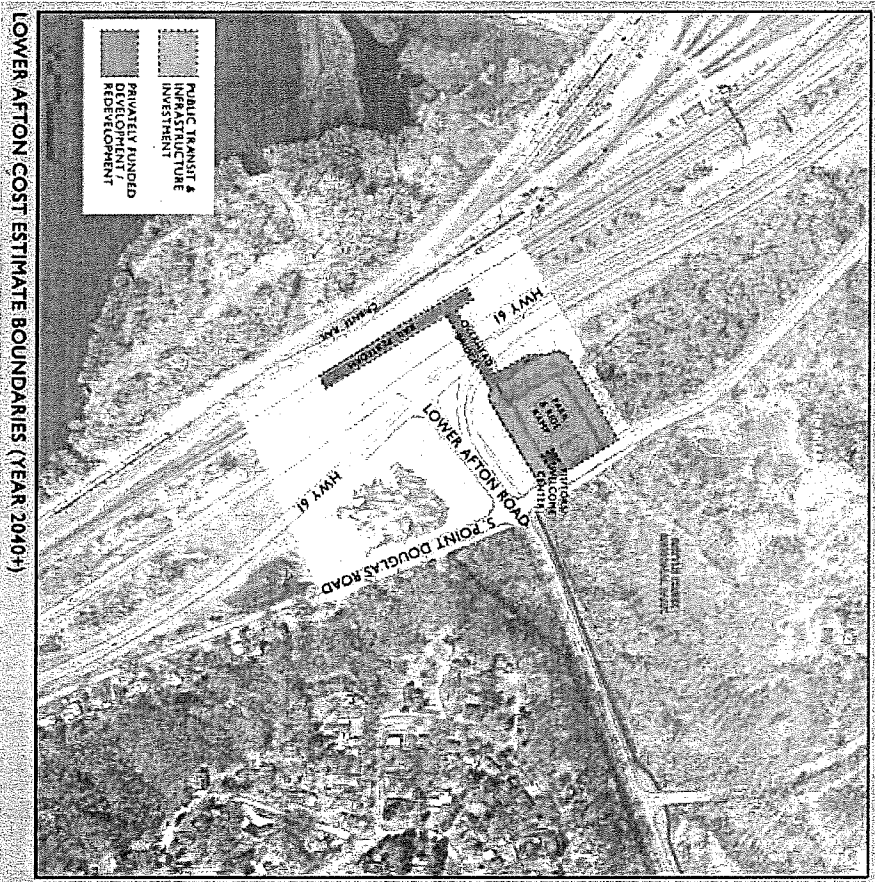
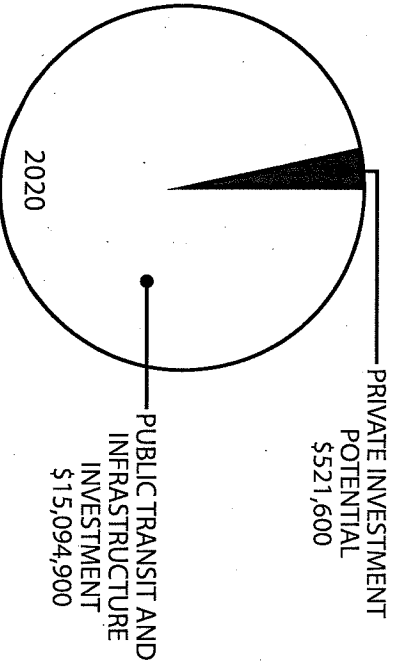
WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?

The preliminary cost estimates identified costs for both the transit station, which would be publicly funded, as well as potential development and redevelopment in the surrounding station areas, which would be privately funded. The public funds would cover the costs of the rail platform, any necessary pedestrian bridges, new roadways to access the stations, and parking lots or ramps for commuters. The private funds would cover the costs associated with new development or redevelopment including new residential, office, commercial, and mixed-use building projects. The pie charts below show the relationship between public funds to build the stations and the potential for private investment in development and redevelopment surrounding the stations.

HOW MUCH WILL NEED TO BE INVESTED?

The cost estimates include implementation of stations in two phases: initial commuter rail service anticipated in the year 2020, and expansion warranted by the year 2040. The cost estimates include the costs associated with the following elements:

- Rail Platform
- Transit Plaza
- Ticketing & Signage
- Pedestrian Bridges
- Parking Facilities
- Roadways
- Utilities
- Environmental Restoration



LOWER AFTON COST ESTIMATE BOUNDARIES (YEAR 2040+)

IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix to the right identifies station-specific tasks and goals in implementing commuter rail in the Red Rock Corridor. The tasks are broken down into the Immediate Term (0-5 years), Mid Term (6-10 years), and Long Term (11+ Years) and also identify the responsible parties for each task--the lead agency is marked with an asterisk.

In addition to the station-specific matrix in each station chapter, there is a corridor-wide implementation strategies matrix in the introduction section.

More detailed information on implementation strategies are available in the Implementation Guide, available under separate cover.

LOWER AFTON IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME				RESPONSIBILITY (*Lead)			
	IMMEDIATE TERM (0-5 YEARS)	MID TERM (6-10 YEARS)	LONG TERM (11+ YEARS)	CITY	COUNTY / RRCC	METRO COUNCIL / METRO TRANSIT	Mn/DOT	OTHER
TASK DESCRIPTION	X			X*	X			
	X			X*				
	X			X	X*	X	X	St. Paul's District I Community
	X			X	X			St. Paul Parks & Recreation Dept. *
	X			X	X*			
	X			X	X*	X	X	MN Pollution Control Agency, State Historic Preservation Office
	X			X	X*	X		Canadian Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads
	X			X	X	X	X	
	X			X	X*	X	X	Red Rock Citizens Advisory Committee
		X						
Add Task			X					
Add Task				X				

End of Section